

## Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 VO-05 INSE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02  
/070 W

-----054975 260520Z /11

P R 260417Z APR 78  
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 075  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY LISBON  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY  
USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SREF, MC  
SUBJECT: MACAU TRANSIT CENTER FOR VIETNAMESE BOAT REFUGEES  
ARRIVING IN HONG KONG

REF: A) STATE 100946 B) KUALA LUMPUR 3371

1. DURING MEETINGS WITH UNHCR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE SAMPATKUMAR  
ON APRIL 24 AND 25 CONGENOFFS REVIEWED PROBLEM OF INCREASING  
SHORTAGE OF ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INDOCHINA REFUGEES REACHING  
HONG KONG. NOTING POINTS CITED IN REF A, WE URGED INVESTIGATION  
OF POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER IN MACAU FOR SPILL-OVER  
IN EVENT HONG KONG FACILITIES BECOME FULL.

2. SAMPATKUMAR REPORTED THAT ON APRIL 24 HE MET WITH NEW  
DIRECTOR OF HONG KONG IMMIGRATION AND DISCUSSED REFUGEE  
HOUSING. HE SAID DIRECTOR GAVE ASSURANCES THAT HONG KONG  
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GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ALLOW SHORTAGE OF HOUSING TO  
AFFECT HONG KONG POLICY OF GRANTING FIRST ASYLUM TO  
BOAT CASES. SAMPATKUMAR ADMITTED THAT THE CHEUNG CHAU  
ISLAND PROPOSAL HAD BEEN REJECTED AND CLAIMED THAT HKI  
WAS NOT PREPARED TO SEEK A NEW SOLUTION FOR HOUSING  
UNTIL A CRISIS ACTUALLY OCCURRED.

3. SAMPATKUMAR EXPRESSED TO US HIS INTEREST IN EXPLORING MACAU AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR SOLVING THE HONG KONG HOUSING SHORTAGE AND, IN FACT, MET WITH MACAU CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE DIRECTOR TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY. HE PROMISED TO RAISE THE MACAU OFFER IN GENEVA AT THE END OF THIS WEEK AND TO VISIT MACAU ON THE THIRD WEEK OF WLAY PROVIDED GENEVA WAS INTERESTED. SAMPATKUMAR SPECIFICALLY SUGGESTED THAT MACAU MIGHT BE USED AS A HOLDING CENTER FOR REFUGEES WHOSE GOVERNMENT PROCESSING HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND WHO WERE AWAITING ONWARD MOVEMENT. HE STRESSED THE PRINCIPAL THAT THE HOST GOVERNMENT GRANTING FIRST ASYLUM TO REFUGEES HAD THE REANFSBILITY FOR PROVIDING HOUSING AND THAT UNHCR ONLY "ASSISTED". HE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE MACAU SEEMED TO BE MAKING A POSITIVE OFFER, UNHCR HAD AN OBLIGATION TO LOOK INTO IT.

4. SAMPATKUMAR POINTED OUT THAT OTHER "ISLAND SOLUTIONS" HAD BEEN OFFERED, MOST SPECIFICALLY, SRGAPORE WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN PRIORITY ATTENTION. HE ADDED THAT IT WAS HIS PERSONAL OPINION THAT THE SINGAPORE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT WORK OUT.

5. COMMENT:

THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSIONS, CONGEN STRESSED THE URGENT NATURE OF HONG KONG'S HOUSING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBLEM. IF PAST EVENTS CAN BE A GUIDE, WE CAN EXPECT WELL OVER A THOUSAND REFUGEES TO ARRIVE THIS SUMMER. VIETNAM'S RECENT NATIONALIZATION OF BUSINESSES IN SAIGON AND THE SUDDEN INFLUX OF REFUGEES THIS MONTH IN MALAYSIA (REF B) SUGGESTS THAT THE REFUGEES FLOW COULD BE EVEN GREATER. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT NEITHER UNHCR OR THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED FOR ANY CONTINGENCIES SHOULD A SUDDEN INFLUX OF REFUGEES OCCUR. IT APPEARS THAT BOTH ARE HOPING THE OTHER WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM. SINCE THERE HAS BEEN NO PROVISIONS MADE FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT URGE UNHCR TO GIVE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION TO THE MACAU OFFER AND DISPATCH A UNHCR OFFICIAL TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBLIITIES THERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. LEVIN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REFUGEES, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 apr 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978HONGK05184  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 STATE 100946, 78 KUALA LUMPUR 3371  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
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**TAGS:** SREF, MC  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014